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Mr. *Gee's*
SERMON
On the Death of
the Reverend
Dr. *Mather.*

Mr. Gee's

SERMON

BRITISH MUSEUM

on the Examination of

the Reverend

Dr. Mather.

Israel's Mourning For Aaron's Death.

A

SERMON

Preached on the Lord's-Day After the Death of the very Reverend and Learned

Cotton Mather, D.D. and F. R. S.

Paſtor of the North Church in *BOSTON*:

Who departed this Life, *February* 13. 1727,8. Æt. LXVI.

By Joſhua Gee, M. A.
Paſtor of the ſame Church.

Acts xx. 38. *Sorrowing moſt of all —— that they ſhould ſee his face no more.*

BOSTON in *New-England*:
Printed for *S. Gerriſh* at the lower End of Cornhil, and *N. Belknap*, near Scarlets-Wharff.
MDCCXXVIII.

ISRAEL's MOURNING

FOR

AARON's DEATH.

A

SERMON

Preached on the LORD's-Day

After the Death of the

Very Reverend

BRITISH MUSEUM

Cotton MATHER, D.D.

and F. R. S.

Pastor of the North Church in BOSTON:

Who departed this Life February 13. 1727/8.

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Pastor of the same Church.

Acts xx. 38. Sorrowing most of all — that they should see his face no more.

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M DCC XXVIII.

Iſrael's Mourning For *Aaron's* Death.

NUMBERS XX. 29.

AND when all the Congregation ſaw that Aaron *was dead, they mourned for* Aaron *thirty days, even all the Houſe of* Iſrael.

THE verſes preceeding give us the hiſtory of the death of *Aaron* the high-prieſt upon mount *Hor*: and our text is an account of the general and publick lamentation to which the LORD's people thought themſelves called upon that occaſion; *And when all the congregation ſaw that* Aaron *was dead, they mourned for* Aaron *thirty days, even all the houſe of* Iſrael.

THESE words are choſen to employ our meditations, at a ſeaſon when GOD in His providence is humbling us under His mighty hand; and calling our whole land to mourn for the death of ONE, who was a very ſignal bleſſing to it: but ſuch are the impreſſions of this providence on a mind, which from a natural weakneſs is too eaſily over-born and diſordered by leſſer occaſions of greif and ſorrow; and ſuch alſo have been my bodily infirmities, as allow me to give you but a few broken & imperfect tho'ts upon them.

IT

IT would have indulged my prevailing temper, if, for a while at leaſt, I might have appeared among the ſilent mourners in this houſe; to hear you entertained by my fathers and brethren, with that which might do greater honour to the dead, and ſervice to the living than, at the beſt, I may think my ſelf capable of. But I dare not indulge the tho'ts of this; from a lively perſuaſion of it, that for me to faint in the day of adverſity would be as truly my ſin, as for me to deſpiſe the chaſtening of the LORD. Tis therefore my deſire to be found in the courſe of my duty, running with patience the race ſet before me, and looking up to JESUS for ſtrength to perform it; that His ſtrength may be glorified in my weakneſs.

IN ſuch a temper I would now proceed to a more particular conſideration of the words of my text; without any ſollicitude for a critical exactneſs in the handling of them. And here,

1. THE congregation ſaw that *Aaron* was dead.
2. THEY mourned for *Aaron* thirty days.
3. ALL the congregation, even all the houſe of *Iſrael*, were ſuch mourners for him.

A few brief reflections upon theſe things obſervable in the words, may prepare us to take a more particular notice of the mournful occaſion, which in the providence of GOD has made them a proper ſubject for our contemplation.

AND

I. *THE congregation ſaw that* Aaron *was dead.*

A few verſes before our text we read, that he went up with *Moſes* and *Eleazar* into mount *Hor*, in the ſight of all the congregation; who now underſtood, by the report of *Moſes* & *Eleazar*, and by other ſigns, that *Aaron* was dead: ſad and awful news, like this, would run quick thro' the camp of *Iſrael*; and it could not be long before *all the congregation ſaw* that *Aaron* was dead.

AARON

AARON the Saint of the LORD was a perſon extraordinarily furniſhed, ſpirited, and called to do ſervice for GOD, and His people in the church of *Iſrael*. He was an eloquent man; concerning whom GOD Himſelf bore witneſs, that he could *ſpeak well* ‖: well for GOD to men, and well for men to GOD. He was the LORD's high-prieſt; and his family was betimes advanced to be at the head of the eccleſiaſtical order *: when GOD entred into covenant with the *Jewiſh* nation; governing them, as His church, by more fixed methods, than were known under the partriarchal ſtate; and eſtabliſhing a regular prieſthood among them. He was a perſon whoſe character and authority GOD had aſſerted and evidenced againſt all that reviled & oppoſed him: his rod miraculouſly budded and bloſſomed ‖; and his brethren that murmured againſt him were moſt remarkably puniſhed *. He was an illuſtrious pattern of the humbleſt reſignation, when the judgments of GOD came near to himſelf †; ſilently ſuffering the ſoreſt bereavements, and turning his loſſes into ſpiritual ſacrifices: while he was at the ſame time as great a pattern of quick diſpatch and fervent importunity in his offerings and interceſſions for others; to avert the divine judgments that were ready to devour and ſwallow them up ‡. He was a man juſtly affected with their folly, ſin and danger who were for making them a captain to return into *Egypt* ‡, and who by murmuring & diſpiſing the good land provoked the LORD to deſtroy them in His anger. He was helpful to *Moſes*, by holding up his hands in faith and prayer againſt the enemies of the LORD's people **. He was one of them who were appointed, as chief magiſtrates, to judge *Iſrael*, and keep the peace and good order in the congregation; when *Moſes* was called up into the mount to receive the tables of the law ‖‖: and this ſpeaks his reputation for wiſdom and faithfulneſs.

‖ *Exod.* 4. 14. * *Exod.* 28 1 ‖ *Numb.* 17. 8. * *Num.* 16. † *Lev.* 10. 3. ‡ *Num.* 16. ‡ *Num.* 14. ** *Exod.* 17. 12. ‖‖ *Exod.* 24. 14.

THESE

THESE, I think, are the main ſtrokes of *Aaron*'s character, as it appears diſperſed in the ſacred hiſtory. The time will not allow us, as we paſs along, to take a particular notice of all the agreable circumſtances by which this character might be illuſtrated. But from theſe general touches it is evident that, notnotwithſtanding any events wherein he diſcovered himſelf to be a man of like paſſions with others, he was truly an extraordinary perſon: a bright ornament and ſingular honour to the church of *Iſrael*; one whom they greatly needed to continue among them; and whoſe departure from them muſt neceſſarily be accounted a great and uncommon loſs indeed.

BUT after all, as few infirmities as he had, and as great an ornament and defence as he was to the church & people of *Iſrael*; yet he was *not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death*: and *all the congregation ſaw that* Aaron *was dead.*

AND *juſt ſo it is with the moſt eminent miniſters of the church of* GOD *in every generation.* However diſtinguiſhed with gifts and graces, activity and uſefulneſs, as might tempt the world from a principle of ſelf-love to wiſh they might never ſee death; yet *our fathers where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?* They dwell in houſes of clay like other Men; and their labours often wear and diſſolve the earthly tabernacles. Sometimes GOD calls them home; becauſe they are ill treated, as pilgrims and ſtrangers, in a world that is not worthy of them. Sometimes they are taken away from evil to come: they are called up to enter into their chambers, that they may not ſee the indignation that is coming on a ſinful people. But if theſe things were intirely out of the caſe, yet they are men; and 'tis appointed for them to dy: and they are ſuch men as have been laying up their treaſures in heaven; their reward is there, and thither they muſt go to receive it.

II.

II. I pass now to the next thing observable in the words; which is, That when the congregation saw that *Aaron* was dead, *they mourned for* Aaron *thirty days.*

We may not expect to arrive at any certainty about the ceremonials of their mourning. In the original it is, they *wept* thirty days: but *weeping*, which is there evidently to be understood in a larger sense for *mourning*, takes in all the proper methods whereby men express their sorrow for the loss sustained in the death of those whom they had reason to love and honour.

AND it has ever been allowed, that *when* GOD *takes such persons away from us by death, 'tis our duty to mourn for them*; not only to have an inward sorrowful sense of the loss we have sustained, but in all proper and decent ways to express the grief of our hearts.

THE manner of mourning for the dead has been various, according to the several customs of countries. The better to express their sorrow for the loss of departed friends, it has been common with the world to differ as much as could be from their ordinary habit and behaviour. A most usual method has been to refrain from every thing that occasioned mirth, and look'd gay and pleasant, as what was unfit to be received among mourners: to refrain from the comforts and conveniences of life: and to fast and wear habits not only differing in colour from their ordinary apparel, but also in value, as being only of a cheaper and coarser stuff. These are observed to be customs practised among the ancients, in the *eastern* countries; where they would also sprinkle dust upon their heads, nay, rowl in the very dirt. Hence we find so frequent mention of penitents lying on the ground, and putting on sack-

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[1] See Greenhill's *Art of Embalming* Lect. 1. p. 77. &c.

cloth and aſhes. They were ſo far from wearing the beſt apparel, that they frequently burned their richeſt goods and cloaths, as well as tore what they had off their backs, on the firſt news of any great calamity. So *Jacob rent his cloaths, and put ſack-cloth on his loins, and mourned for his ſon many days*, Gen. 37. 34. And the ſcripture-hiſtory affords many inſtances of this mourning in ſackloth and aſhes. But theſe tokens of grief were accompanied alſo with mourning tears; which not only expreſs our love to a friend, and our ſorrow for the loſs of him, but tend to moderate our paſſions, and allay our concern. And weeping for the dead is ſo far from an unjuſtifiable weakneſs, that we find examples of it in the greateſt and beſt of men. How did *Abraham* † weep and mourn for his *Sarah*, *Joſeph* ‖ for his father *Jacob*, and *David* * for his Children? And not to multiply inſtances, did not our bleſſed SAVIOUR weep over the grave of *Lazarus* ‖ whom he loved, as well as over obſtinate *Jeruſalem* ‡ whoſe deſolation he foreſaw coming on her? Which is enough to ſatisfy us, that as GOD has given us natural affections, we may uſe them aright, and yet let them reach to the memory as well as life of them we love, and break out in mourning tears. And thus we ſhould weep and mourn for our dead *friends*: we ſhould be grieved for their death, and ſuitably expreſs our grief according to the decent cuſtoms of the times and places where we live.

WE ſhould likewiſe mourn for the death of all *good and uſeful men*, according to their reſpective characters and ſtations. So when GOD takes away pious and uſeful perſons in a *private capacity*; when the righteous periſh, and merciful men are taken away; whoſe good works, prayers and holy example were of great ſervice in the places where they lived;

† *Gen.* 23. 2. ‖ *Gen.* 50. 1, 10, 11. * 2 *Sam.* 13. 31, 33, 36. ‖ *Joh.* 11. 35. ‡ *Luk.* 19. 41.

this

this calls for ſorrow and mourning. And it doth ſo more eſpecially, when he takes away ſuch men of a *public character*, ſingularly qualified for, and faithful in their ſeveral poſts and ſtations.

BUT our ſubject leads us more particularly to be ſenſible of our obligations to mourn for the death of *eminent, holy and uſeful miniſters*; as *the congregation mourned for* AARON. They mourned not upon his account, as if it were not better for him to depart than to abide in the fleſh: but for their own loſs in his death. For tho' the bleſſed hope was not ſo clearly revealed to them, as it is to us under the Goſpel; yet they had light enough under that diſpenſation to keep them from mourning without hope in the death of ſuch faithful ſervants of the GOD of *Iſrael*. Much leſs can we think ourſelves called thus to mourn for the death of eminent, holy and uſeful miniſters; ſince life and immortality are brought to light by the goſpel, thro' JESUS CHRIST who is the reſurrection and the life. No, as for them, the day of their death is better than the day of their birth; for by death GOD takes them to Himſelf. When they depart, it is that they may be with CHRIST; which is far better than to abide in the fleſh: they enter into reſt; *Bleſſed are the dead which dy in the* LORD, *from henceforth, yea, ſaith the Spirit, that they may reſt from their labours and their works do follow them* ‖. And we are well aſſured, that the time and manner or their death is ordered by infinite wiſdom and infinite goodneſs, as ſhall be truly beſt for them. Inſtead therefore of mourning for them, we have cauſe rather to be thankful for their deliverance from ſo great, and ſuch manifold evils as we are here expoſed to, whom they leave behind them in this ſinful world.

‖ *Rev.* 14. 13.

BUT tho' we have ſuch cauſe to rejoice in their gain, yet we muſt mourn for our own loſs, and the great loſs we have ſuſtained in their death. For the taking away of the *prophet*, i. e. ſuch as miniſter in holy things, diſpenſe the word of GOD to us, and treat with us in His name, upon the great points that concern our ſpiritual and eternal intereſts; this is to be reckoned among the frowns of Heaven, as well as the taking away of the *mighty man, the man of war, and the judge*: and it may be tho't the greater loſs to them who are left behind. We ſhould not fail therefore in all proper methods to expreſs our ſorrow upon ſuch occaſions: like them who *wept ſore, ſorrowing for the words that* Paul *ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more* *. This is an honour due to their memory; however we treated them in their lives. For ſuch eminent holy and uſeful miniſters are great bleſſings to their people, while they live; and all under their charge, if it be not their own fault, muſt receive great benefit from them. But whether we have received ſuch advantage or no; and if we have abuſed the bleſſings, and thro' our own fault have loſt the benefit; yet ſtill we are bound to mourn for their death and departure from us.

AND here an inquiry into the *ſpecial grounds* of mourning upon the death of eminent, holy, and uſeful miniſters would offer it ſelf to our more particular conſideration: but I may not enlarge upon it.

1. ONE ſpecial ground and reaſon of it may be taken from the opportunities and advantages for receiving good by their miniſtry, which are *loſt* in their death. We are commanded to *remember thoſe* ſpiritual *rulers, who have ſpoken to us the word of GOD*, Heb. 13. 7. But how do we comply with this com-

* Acts 20. 38.

mand,

mand, unleſs we remember the gifts and graces that were in them, with all the good we have received by their means, and what opportunities & advantages we ſhould ſtill have had for getting good by them, if GOD had ſpared their lives? And is it poſſible for us to remember them after ſuch a manner, without finding it work upon our affections in a ſenſe of our want, and in grief for our loſs? While GOD ſpares their lives, whom He has eminently gifted and qualified for the miniſterial office, and makes faithful in it, they are ſpiritual *ſhepherds* and *watchmen* to the ſouls of their people. On the account of their doctrine & example, our SAVIOUR teaches us to call ſuch men the *ſalt of the earth*, and the *lights of the world*: For as the virtue of *ſalt* lies in ſeaſoning other things, and keeping them from corruption: ſo by their life and doctrine, ſuch eminent, holy, and uſeful miniſters do ſeaſon the manners of men and keep them from the putrifaction of ſin. And as the *ſun* diſpells the miſts of darkneſs which overſpread the earth, and enables men to walk and act after ſuch a manner as may beſt anſwer the ends of life: ſo they, by their doctrine and example, diſpel the darkneſs, and cure the blindneſs of mens minds; and enlighten them with knowledge and holineſs. And how many and great are the bleſſings, which they who live under their charge have opportunities and advantages for receiving by their miniſtry?

BUT now all theſe opportunities and advantages are loſt, when ſuch miniſters are taken away by death. Such a time therefore is to be regarded as a time of ſuffering, and on that account a time of mourning. For doth not the hand of the LORD ſeem to be out againſt us, when He takes away ſuch advantages and opportunities from us? Is not ſuch a bereavement to be conſidered as a token of divine diſpleaſure? And ſhould we not therefore be ſorrowfully affected and mourn under it? What ſtupidity doth it argue to be unaffected under GOD's afflicting hand: if we are *not grieved when He ſtrikes us, but refuſe to receive correction*? Jer. 5. 3.

BUT

BUT then no man is to conſider himſelf alone under ſuch bereavements. And if natural affection and humane tenderneſs will lead us to conſider the part which our neareſt relatives, children, and friends may bear with us in them; the principles of chriſtianity will take into our concern and ſympathy all that may be called to mourn with us; tho' related neither by the bonds of nature nor of grace. The death of ſuch miniſters ſhould be grievous alſo to them who are not immediately bereaved, but only ſee what reaſon others have to mourn under their ſufferings and loſſes. For as we ſhould rejoice with them that rejoice: ſo we ſhould mourn with them that mourn. And perſons are often called to mourn for the death of miniſters, by way of chriſtian ſympathy with others who are therein bereaved of ſignal opportunities & advantages for getting good.

2. ANOTHER ſpecial ground and reaſon of mourning upon the death of eminent, holy, and uſeful miniſters may be taken from the *neglect* or *abuſe* of ſuch opportunities and advantages, while they were enjoyed under their miniſtry. In the death of ſuch miniſters GOD may puniſh the ſins of their people; who under ſuch a bereavement ſhould always ſuſpect themſelves, and conſider, whether GOD is not now bringing their ſins to remembrance. And in order to find out wherefore GOD contendeth with them, they ought ſeriouſly to examin themſelves, whether the opportunities and advantages which now they have loſt, were not ſinfully neglected or abuſed. Now 'tis impoſſible for us at ſuch a time to take this method, but we muſt neceſſarily diſcover ſufficient grounds of mourning upon the death of eminent, holy and uſeful miniſters: as the very beſt of us, upon a ſerious examination, muſt ſee and own that we have not come up to our duty in the entertainment we gave to them, and to the meſſages which they bro't us in GOD's name. For if we call our ſelves to a ſtrict account (as GOD expects we ſhould) how we have attended their miniſtry; how we have received

received the doctrines of godliness which they delivered; how we followed the holy example which they set before us; how we delighted in their usefulness; and how we have glorified GOD in them, by considering them only as instruments, and ascribing to Him the glory which is due to His name, for all the excellencies which adorned them, and made them so desireable and useful in the World: I say, if we duely reflect upon these things, the very best of us will find, that the opportunities & advantages for receiving good by their ministry have been too much neglected or abused. And according as we have been guilty in one or both of these regards, we should humble our selves, and mourn with godly sorrow before the LORD; confessing that He is righteous to take away the blessings, which we received no better, and imployed so more to His glory, while we had them.

BUT then if it could be supposed, that any particular persons should upon a just enquiry find themselves entirely clear and innocent in these respects; yet they have the sins of others to mourn for; if they would not be partakers with them. When we think how opportunities and advantages of getting good by eminent, holy and useful ministers have been neglected and abused, we have reason to fear that GOD hath taken them away in his anger: the apprehensions of which should make us mourn for our loss; whether we apprehend it inflicted as a punishment upon our selves or upon others.

3. ANOTHER ground of mourning on the death of such ministers is, That we can be *no longer delighted with beholding their eminently useful lives*, in the exercise of those gifts and graces which GOD had bestowed upon them. They who are governed by the refined and exalted spirit of christianity, cannot behold others act up to their character, and glorify GOD by employing their gifts and graces according to their several callings and relations, without finding

finding a very high delight and pleasure in it: like the Apostle *Paul* who *joyed to behold the order and the stedfastness of their faith*, wherewith the *Colossians* glorified God *. Such a pleasure will naturally result from the principles of our holy religion, while we observe the numberless projections and essays to do good wherewith God is glorified by eminent, holy and useful ministers. And this pleasure will increase upon beholding the success of their labours, in proportion as we have reason to think, that glory redounds to the name of God, and good is done to the souls of men. But the death of such men puts a period to the pleasure of beholding their useful lives; which will be considered by wise and good men as one special ground of mourning for it.

THUS we have taken notice of our duty to mourn for the death of eminent, holy and useful ministers; as the congregation mourned for *Aaron*.

BUT the congregation *mourned for* Aaron *thirty days*: which may lead us to this remark upon it, *That when we mourn for the death of good and useful men, whom we had reason to love and honour, we should have regard to their special character and station.* The congregation did not content themselves to mourn for AARON *seven* days, which was the time appointed for persons of a private character but they mourned *thirty* days; which, the learned tell us, was the time of mourning allotted for men of a public character †. Eminent ministers are to be considered as public persons: and as GOD has furnished, spirited, and employed them while they lived; we should accordingly mourn for them after an extraordinary manner when they are dead. The death of private persons is not so great and extensive a loss, as the death of such ministers: the death of these therefore

* *Col.* 2, 5. † *Drus.* & *Ainsw.* in loc.

should

ſhould raiſe a greater ſorrow in our hearts, and calls for a greater degree of mourning than the death of private perſons. If we ſhould mourn for the one ſort ſeven days, we ſhould mourn for the other ſort thirty days: As the congregation mourned for *Aaron*; having a ſpecial regard to his eminent character and ſtation.

I ſhall make only this one remark more upon the ſecond thing obſervable in our text; *That we may often find reaſon to mourn for the loſs of thoſe perſons when they are dead, who were not juſtly valued and well treated while they lived.* Mourning for the dead was always accounted honourable: And here they mourn for *Aaron* thirty days, when they had diſhonoured him by rebelling againſt him forty Years. And 'tis the lot of many of the ſervants of GOD, to have more honour after their death than in their life, ſays Mr. *Ainſworth.* In like manner Mr. *Henry* notes upon the place: and with his words I ſhall conclude this head. "'Twas a debt owing to their high-prieſt to *mourn for him.* While he lived they were *murmuring* at him upon all occaſions; but now he was dead, they mourned for him. Thus many are taught to lament the loſs of thoſe mercies, which they would not learn to be thankful for the enjoyment of. Many good men have had more honour done to their memories than ever they had to their perſons; witneſs thoſe who were perſecuted while they lived, but when they were dead had their ſepulchres garniſhed". Thus *the congregation mourned for* Aaron *thirty days.*

III. But the third thing to be obſerved in our text is, That *all the congregation, even all the houſe of* Iſrael *mourned thus for* Aaron. 'Twas common for *all the congregation* to mourn for the death of public perſons *; even *all the Houſe of Iſrael*, women as well as men, and perſons of every rank & condition *.

* *Druſ.* & *Ainſw.* in loc.

When the LORD of hoſts took away from His people the *mighty man and the man of war*, men who were as the ſhields of the earth, the guards upon their valuable intereſts; or the *judge* and the *prophet*, men who were as gods upon earth to inſtruct the world, to maintain peace and order, and execute juſtice among men: it has been thought a proper time for general lamentation. In 2 Sam. 3. 31, 32. we read that upon the death of *Abner*, a mighty man of war, *David* ſaid to all the people, *Rent your cloaths and gird you with ſackcloth, and mourn before* Abner. *And king* David *himſelf followed the bier. And they buried* Abner *in* Hebron: *and the king lift up his voice, and wept at the grave of* Abner; *and all the people wept.* And upon the death of *Samuel* that PROPHET of the LORD, who JUDGED *Iſrael* all the days of his life, we read 1 Sam. 25. 1. That *all the Iſraelites were gathered together, and lamented him.* So *Aaron* being a man of a *public character*, and one that *adorned* the eminent ſtation which GOD ſet him in; we find that *all the congregation*, even *all the Houſe of* Iſrael *mourned* for him.

AND this one remark may be made upon it, *That the death of eminent, holy and uſeful miniſters in the church of* GOD *is a public loſs, and calls for general and public lamentation.*

FOR

SUCH men, while they live, are an honour & ornament to their country. They not only reflect honour upon men who are of the ſame character and profeſſion with themſelves: but they gain credit and reputation to the whole land. They recommend themſelves to ſtrangers, who will give themſelves an opportunity to be well acquainted with them; and are ſerviceable to procure a good name abroad for the places where they live, and for the whole people among whom they ſhine as lights in the world. So that in the death of ſuch Perſons a people may ſee a conſiderable part of *glory departing*: which will be

be esteemed a just ground of public and general lamentation by all, excepting only such as are wholly destitute of that shining virtue, *The love of ones country*; without which men deserve to be denied all the benefit of humane Society.

AND 'tis matter of general and public grief and mourning, that the churches of GOD are bereaved of the presence and use of such men. Nor may we think it possible for any to refrain from mourning on the death of eminent holy and useful ministers, who place any part of the beauty and glory of a country in it's ecclesiastical and religious interests: which, as far as they are agreable to the *divine institutions*, are indeed the great beauty and glory of any country; and used to be more generally esteemed as the glory of *New-England*.

MOREOVER by taking away such men GOD gives us reason to fear approaching judgments: and this further evidences it to be matter of general and public lamentatation. For ought we know, such eminent men are taken away in order to some public evil, which will come sooner when they are gone. The smaller the number of such men among a people, will they not the sooner fill up the measure of their iniquities? Such men have great influence with heaven to avert the tokens of divine displeasure. Like *Moses* and *Aaron*, they will not let GOD alone, that he may consume a people. We may fear therefore that when GOD is calling them from us by death, 'tis to make way for the execution of His judgments. When *Elijah* was taken away in a very evil age, *Elisha* cried out, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!* "What will become of *Israel* now thou art gone"! And where a people are not called to entertain such dark apprehensions from the death of any one great and good man among them; yet there is never any one such death, which doth not weaken and expose them: much more doth many such, within a short space of time, lay a foundation

for the moſt uneaſy apprehenſions among a ſinful people. How often has GOD's calling up His ſervants into their chambers of reſt been the ſad prognoſtic, that the divine indignation was juſt breaking out againſt a people? If the righteous periſh, and no man layeth it to heart; is it not a ſign, that they are taken away from evil to come? When GOD therefore is taking away eminent, holy, and uſeful miniſters we ſhould think our ſelves called to mourn for it, with general and public lamentation.

THUS the ſeveral things obſervable in our text have been briefly conſidered. We ſee, That as the moſt eminent of GOD's miniſters dy, and are called up from us, 'tis our duty to mourn for them; and why the death of ſuch men gives juſt occaſion for public and general lamentation.

AND NOW *from the foregoing diſcourſe we may learn, what reaſon the people of GOD in this land have to mourn before Him.*

FOR among the various judgments inflicted for our ſins, what breaches doth he make in the wall of ſafety round about us, by taking away men of great worth and ſervice, not only of the civil but ſacred character? And eſpecially if we view the eccleſiaſtical order, the breach he hath made upon it, is great like the ſea; by the removal of our ſpiritual fathers from us, one after another: men of ſuperiour rank and character for age and experience, learning, reputation, piety, wiſdom, fidelity and uſefulneſs in the ſacred calling.

WITHIN a few months paſt, we have been called to lament the deaths of two ſuch aged ſervants of the LORD ‖: while the days of mourning were ſcarce

‖ The Rev. Mr. *Samuel Danforth* of *Taunton*, who died *Novemb.* 14. And my honoured father-in-law the Rev. Mr. *Peter Thacher* of *Milton*, who died *Dec.* 17. 1727.

over

over, for the breach He had made upon the ſacred order in this town, by the death of a truly pious and faithful miniſter †, in the midſt of his days and uſefulneſs. And now it has pleaſed Heaven once again to break open the fountain of our grief: for we are now called to take a more ſpecial notice of the occaſion which we have to mourn before GOD, in the death of the very reverend Dr. COTTON MATHER, our faithful and beloved paſtor, who in the ſovereign wiſe and holy providence of our LORD, is called up from us.

I own that a little modeſty will forbid me to attempt an exact character of ſo great a man. But piety towards GOD obliges every one of us to have a proper ſenſe of the uncommon loſs we have ſuſtained, that after a ſuitable manner we may humble ourſelves and mourn for the frown of Heaven in this diſpenſation: while my character and relation to this beloved flock of CHRIST infer the ſtrongeſt bonds upon me, to endeavour that you may have juſt impreſſions from divine providences; and at the ſame time, a concern for the honour of CHRIST, and a principle of love and gratitude to His deceaſed ſervant, with whom for ſome years I have been called to ſerve as a ſon in the goſpel, are powerfully working in my breaſt, as incentives to act up to my duty upon this mournful occaſion.

IT will therefore be expected, that in repreſenting to you the providence of GOD, which calls aloud upon us to mourn this day, I ſhould conſider it, as it affects others beſides ourſelves; and demands the general and public lamentation of all the land. For in this death of one who made ſo bright an appearance among the excellent of the earth, the whole

† My dearly beloved friend & brother the Rev. Mr. *William Waldron*, who died *Sept.* 11. 1727.

land

land has loſt a very conſiderable part of it's ſtrength and glory. Truth and juſtice have loſt a champion, who was able to defend and maintain them: Learning hath loſt an eminent patron, who was ever ready to promote it: The churches have loſt a paſtor, who was a pillar in the houſe of his GOD. Now men of ſuch a character with ſtrength and courage ſtand in the gap, to keep off judgments; and, by lifting up of hands in faith and prayer, are prevalent with the LORD againſt the enemies of His people: They muſt therefore be always acknowledged, as the ornaments of our country, and the ſtrength & defence of it too: like the chariots of *Iſrael* and the horſemen thereof, whoſe ſpiritual weapons are mighty thro' GOD. And without any further reaſoning upon the point, will not this be thought ſufficient to put the congregation of *Iſrael*, even our whole land, into mourning for the death of ſuch a great and good man, who was ſet for the defence of our deareſt intereſts, civil and ſacred?

BUT then what abundant reaſon have all in the ſame ſacred office to mourn and lament the loſs we have ſuſtained? If ſome few have loſt a brother, the moſt of us by far have loſt a maſter and a father, whoſe aſſiſtence, incouragement, and counſel were always with pleaſure afforded, in the weightieſt caſes of doctrine and of diſcipline. He was a bright ornament, and ſingular honour to the miniſterial order and profeſſion: ſhining as an inſtance and pattern of natural acquired and gracious endowments. The capacity of his mind; the readineſs of his wit; the vaſtneſs of his reading; the ſtrength of his memory; the variety and treaſure of his learning, in printed works, and in manuſcripts which contain a much greater ſhare; the ſplendour of virtues, which, from the abundant grace of GOD with him, ſhone out in the conſtant tenor of a moſt entertaining and profitable converſation; his uncommon activity in the ſervice of CHRIST; his unwearied application to all the different exerciſes of the paſtoral function; his extenſive

zeal,

zeal, and numberleſs projections to do good on all occaſions; theſe things, as they were united in him, proclaimed him to be truly an extraordinary perſon; and united to make it difficult to find his equal among men of like paſſions with us. He was pious, but not affected; ſerious without moroſeneſs; grave, but not auſtere; affable without meanneſs; and facetious without levity. He was peaceable in his temper; but zealous againſt ſin. He was a ſtrenuous nonconformiſt to uninſtituted ceremonies impoſed upon conſcience, as terms of communion among ſaints; which he conſidered as violations of chriſtian liberty, and ſnares to the ſouls of men: He ſtrictly adhered to congregational principles of church-order and government; which he tho't moſt agreable to the rule of GOD's word, the laws of ſociety, and the rights of mankind: He was a vigorous defender of the reformed doctrines of grace, and of the myſteries of revealed religion; which he ever regarded as the excelling glory of the chriſtian diſpenſation: And yet he was catholick in his charity to all good men, tho' differing from him in circumſtantials and modalities; deſirous to have churches reſemble the kingdom of Heaven; willing to receive all men, as CHRIST receives us to the glory of GOD; and pleading for no terms of communion among ſaints, but the terms of ſalvation. He was abundant in liberality to the poor, both for ſoul and body; but careful to diſtinguiſh the proper objects of it; and obliging to ſtrangers, tho' often ill-requited.

THESE are ſome of the ſhining parts of his character; which made him an honour and ornament to the ſacred office among us; and render his death ſo great a loſs, to all whom he hath left behind him in it. And theſe things do likewiſe conſtrain all that knew him to mourn for his removal from us: if they have any pretence to reſemble him; as a ſcholar, a divine, a chriſtian, or a gentleman.

THUS

THUS religion and humanity are conſpiring to force a ſigh or a tear, from all that do not ſo far live beneath the dictates of reaſon and conſcience, as to render their moſt favourable regards for any, but the blemiſhes and wounds of honour & reputation. And could I imagine, that any in this aſſembly belong to that herd of abandoned mortals, whoſe ſport it has been to reek their venom upon a faithful ſervant of GOD, in profane and ungodly ſcorn and deriſion; I would, in compaſſion to their poor ſouls, turn my diſcourſe to them and ſay,---Mourn, O forſaken wretches, mourn at length the death of that ſaint, who endeavoured, by his holy exhortations and fervent prayers, to keep you from the damnation of hell fire, and turn you to the wiſdom of the juſt; while he lived above the reach of your envy and malice, and, in imitation of his great maſter JESUS CHRIST, was grieved for the hardneſs of your hearts. If you will not mourn at his death; GOD only knows how ſoon, if He ever have mercy on you, you will be conſtrained to it at your own: like ſome others already, who have found it impoſſible to take comfort in the hopes of the mercy of GOD; till they had repented and bewailed their abuſe of His ſervant.

BUT that which moſt nearly concerns me at preſent is, to perſwade you of this church & congregation duely to humble your ſelves and mourn under the mighty hand of GOD; that in due time He may exalt you. And there is no need of running over the topics deviſed in the art of perſwaſion, in order to move your paſſions here: You have a living ſpring of ſorrow in your hearts, which naturally breaks out into mourning upon this occaſion. For what rendered your excellent paſtor ſo deſireable to virtuous and good men, of every order profeſſion and character, could not but exceedingly endear him to you; in whoſe ſpecial ſervice it was, that his light ſhone before others. It is enough therefore to ſay, You are called to mourn the death of an *able miniſter of the new*

new teſtament; a maſter in our *Iſrael*, a work-man that needed not to be aſhamed, a moſt accompliſhed divine, who rightly divided unto you the word of truth, as it is in JESUS; the life and ſweet of whoſe miniſtry it was to preach JESUS. You are called to mourn the death of a tender and faithful *Shepherd*; a paſtor after GOD's own heart, who looked well to the ſtate of his flock, and fed you with knowledge and underſtanding, who fed the ſheep and fed the lambs. You are called to mourn the death of a ſpiritual *father*; by whoſe learned, painful, and flaming miniſtry, many of you have been begotten again to GOD. You are called to mourn the death of a *wiſe builder*; who could raiſe a ſtrong and beautiful ſuperſtructure upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himſelf being the chief corner ſtone; and who was the bleſſed inſtrument of your edification in faith and holineſs. You are called to mourn the death of a moſt vigilant *watchman*; who gave you warning of ſpiritual enemies, and roufed you up to put on the whole armour of GOD and reſiſt them; and who was always concerned, that you might know and ſhun your danger. You are called to mourn the death of a ſkilful *guide* to your ſouls; who held forth unto you the word of GOD, as a lamp to your feet, and a light to your path, in paſſing through a dark world; whoſe care it was to direct your holy walk in the paths of truth and peace; and who from the conſtraining love of CHRIST would take the ſweeteſt delight in expoſing himſelf, that he might help you forward in the way to everlaſting life. You are called to mourn the death of a *man of prayer*; who delighted in his effectual fervent interceſſions to carry all your important concerns to the throne of grace, and put them over into the hands of a more powerful intereſſor there; and who took all opportunities to promote and encourage the ſocieties, wherein that holy exercile of religion ſhould be principally regarded. You are called to mourn the death of ONE whoſe natural, acquired, & gracious endowments were vaſtly a greater treaſure, than GOD commonly puts into earthen veſſels;

and who faithfully employed them all in your ſervice. In a word; you are called to mourn the death of ONE who, tho' his learned and uſeful labours were acknowledged with diſtinguiſhing honours abroad ‖, yet counted it by far a greater honour to ſee them bleſſed with ſucceſs, for the good of your ſouls: and GOD was graciouſly pleaſed to crown them with this greater honour, in ſome meaſure according to the abundance of them; for how many that hear me this day, and how many that are gone to heaven before us, have often bleſſed him in their ſouls, when they heard the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; and will ever bleſs GOD for him, as an inſtrument of their everlaſting happineſs!

I am well aſſured, you have not only been overborn with an eaſy tho' ſtrong conviction of the certain truth of all theſe particulars, as we paſſed over them: but could eaſily of your ſelves enlarge upon them all. And is not ſuch a plain and artleſs enumeration of them enough to make the inward ſpring of ſorrow riſe, and overflow in mourning tears, like waters poured out before the LORD?

MOURN for your *loſs*. And how great a loſs have you ſuſtained in ſuch a death as this! So great and heavy, that mourning is the beſt deſcription of it: mourning not for him who has been called up from you; but for your ſelves and for your children who are left behind. Doubtleſs, if your deceaſed paſtor could now ſpeak to you, it would be in thoſe words of our bleſſed Saviour to the daughters of *Jeruſalem*, *weep not for me, but weep for your ſelves, and for your children* *. GOD is now ſaying, your eyes ſhall ſee your teacher no more, and the places that have known him ſhall know him no more: you ſhall no more hear his pleaſant voice, in doctrine for your

‖ A *doctorate* in the univerſity of *Glaſgo* in *Scotland*, and a *fellowſhip* with the *Royal Society* in *London*.

* *Luke* 23. 28.

inſtruction; in warnings for your caution; in exhortations for your quickning and comfort: you ſhall enjoy no more of his delightful and profitable converſation, of his fervent and prevalent prayers, or of his bright and moving example among you: his painful and laborious ſervices for you are over and at an end forever; and he is gone to reap his reward. Oh! how ſhould you be affected when you conſider your loſs as a matter and ground of mourning!

BUT then *mourn* for the *ſins* which may have occaſioned this affliction and frown of Heaven upon you. For as our ſins do often hinder good things coming to us; ſo they often provoke GOD to take away His bleſſings from us: when therefore He is taking away mercies, it becomes us to conſider whether we have not been ſinning againſt mercies. And there are ſins againſt eminent, holy, and uſeful miniſters, which may provoke GOD to take them away from a people; as when they are overvalued, and ſet in GOD's ſtead; or when they are too lightly eſteemed, and the earthen veſſels are deſpiſed, tho' there is much treaſure in them; or when a people are unthankful and unfruitful, barren and unprofitable under their enlightening, awakening, & powerful miniſtry: when they who are in a ſtate and courſe of ſin, will not repent and reform; and when they who profeſs more religion continue cold, formal, indevout, and will not be quickened. Now then is a time for us to conſider what ſins of ours may have provoked GOD, and to make them the matter of our mourning and lamentation before Him. Let us now think ſeriouſly with our ſelves, whether we may not take up the lamentation of the church and ſay, *The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us, that we have ſinned.* *

AND ſhould we not *mourn* from *apprehenſions of repeated troubles?* One ſtroke many times makes

* Lam. 5. 16.

way for another. And when ſuch a breach is made upon us, do we not lie open to other evils, which (if GOD prevent not) will ruſh in upon us, like a flood? This is a conſideration which further calls for our mourning before the LORD; eſpecially when our deceaſed paſtor expreſſed his tender concern for us, in this very regard, during his laſt agonies. Amidſt the convulſions of nature, with a faultering tongue he obſerved to me, what a *difficult time we ſhould have of it, if the poor flock ſhould be broken with contentions and confuſions.* And while he was beginning to give his laſt advice for preventing of it, before the firſt ſentence was pronounced, his voice failed him and never pronounced a ſentence more.

But while I perſwade you to your duty, I am not unmindful of my own. Pity me, O my friends, for the hand of the LORD hath touched me, more heavily than you can be ſuppoſed to feel it in this providence. The LORD hath taken up my maſter from my head, and heard me cry after him, *my father, my father!* And beſides the peculiar ſhare which I have in the common loſs, ſuſtained by the land, by the miniſterial order, and by this church and congregation; I have extraordinary reaſon to lament his death, and to love his memory. He was an inſtrument of ſpiritual good to me, in his miniſtry, from my early days; and very much aſſiſted and directed my youthful ſtudies: He excited me to publick ſervice in the miniſtry; and accepted me to ſerve with him, as a ſon in the goſpel: He bore with my infirmities; and helped me under difficulties: He quickened me to my work; and ſhewed me an example: He inſtructed, admoniſhed, and exhorted me as a father; while by his condeſcending goodneſs he raiſed me to the level of a friend and a brother. And as I truly loved him from my early childhood: ſo I loved to honour him in ſuitable acknowledgments of his excellencies and my obligations; till death has parted us. But this love has been made ſtronger by death:

for what I beheld in his laſt ſickneſs and dying hours, has raiſed my affections higher than ever; and I value the bleſſing in the want of it, even more than in the enjoyment.

FROM the beginning of his confinement, he diſcovered a ſtrong perſwaſion that it would prove his laſt ſickneſs; but he had not left the great work of preparation for death to ſuch a time. As GOD had made him a remarkable inſtance of early piety: ſo from his youth he had been walking with GOD, and walking much in the light of His countenance. And now his great concern was for *a ſoul* entirely *reſign'd to the will of* GOD; which was but the *perfecting* of a moſt refined temper of chriſtianity, that appeared to provail in him thro' his life; and whereby he had been often enabled, after a wonderful manner, to glorify GOD: eſpecially under ſuch bereavements as were moſt difficult to be born with a profound reſignation. He ſeveral times told me, that he had been favoured with *bright and clear views of* GOD & CHRIST & *Heaven*; tho' not ſo many or laſting as were granted him in former ſickneſſes *, and

* "I will take this opportunity to give the reader ſeveral paſſages, relating to a former ſickneſs; as they were communicated to me ſince the Doctor's death, by a gentleman who was himſelf a witneſs of them.

"Boſton, January 26th (Thurſday) 1720, 1.

"A SPEECH of the Rev. Dr. *Cotton Mather* to ſome of his church & neighbours, when under threatning ſickneſs; penned down by one of them immediately afterwards.

"I am ſingularly advantaged in two or three reſpects. "1. I have learned to eſteem patience under ſickneſs, "to be better than health it ſelf. 2. I am ſure my "ſins which have been many and mighty are all par"doned, for the ſake of the ſacrifice of CHRIST. I "am ſure CHRIST's blood has been applied to me, be"cauſe of it's purifying efficacy on me; and that His

"death

and particularly when he was brought down to the gates of the grave last spring. But *Child*, said he, *GOD is now trying my patience; and my great concern is that that may have it's perfect work. I*

" death has been for me, because I live unto GOD.
" 3. I am, thro' the grace of CHRIST, got above the
" fear of death: I am a conqueror, yea more than a
" conqueror over that king of terrors; and if I was as-
" sured, I should dy this very night, I could entertain
" death as the best friend I ever met withal. And then
" as to the things which men generally trouble them-
" selves about, as worldly estate, children &c. I can
" leave all in the hands of a dear SAVIOUR, whose
" watchful providence will graciously take care of them.
" —— And this happy frame I ascribe to my having
" conversed much with a glorious CHRIST, &c. I
" speak not this in the least from any proud or vain-
" glorious tho'ts; but to let you know, that the prin-
" ciples I have so often insisted on in my ministry, will
" support a man under the apprehensions of death."
When a friend at parting said, *I hope it will be but a light affliction*; he replied, " *I know it will work for* " *me a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory.*

A few days after, he said to one of the same persons,
—— " I have in this time of sickness been often exa-
" mining into my desires of life. The most men desire
" to live, either, 1. Because they are afraid to dy: but
" now that will never do. What! after so many years
" under such rich advantages, and be afraid to dy! By
" no means. But, I bless GOD, *that* point thro' our
" LORD JESUS CHRIST is well provided for. Or,
" 2. Because they have such a strong affection to, and
" delight in creature-comforts: but now this will not
" do neither. What! be loth to leave streams, and go
" to the fountain! What! love the creatures more
" than the Creator, in whom all good is originally and
" transcendently! The only plea then is, *My advantages* " *to do good*: I am in working case, and may, by
" GOD's blessing, be instrumental to bring some small
" honours to GOD's name: and whenever GOD shall
" please to put an end to this, I am resign'd; & have no
" more to say, but wait His good pleasure."

an

am labouring, and I hope with ſucceſs, to have my will entirely ſwallowed up in the will of GOD. And, ſaid he more than once with peculiar emphaſis, *When once I can come to this that* my will is entirely reſign'd to the will of GOD, *then farewell all friends below; I ſhall* have nothing more to do *here.* Accordingly a few hours before his death, calling for me to pray with him, upon a little revival in his laſt agonies, he expreſſed a moſt admirable patience under them, as the appointed way of going to CHRIST: and after prayer he ſaid to me, *Now I have nothing more to do here*; and explained it to me by adding, *My will is now entirely reſigned to the will of GOD.*

FOUR days before this, when we thought him dying, and he tho't himſelf to be ſo; he ſaid to me before prayer, *Give thanks that I am not afraid with any amazement, at the apprehenſions of a dying hour; and for all the help which GOD hath favoured me with in the ſervice of CHRIST; and that He hath now given me ſo good a proſpect of the end of my pilgrimage, that I can rejoice in the hope of His glory, even with joy unſpeakable.* Upon a little revival, he then told me, there were ſome ſpecial ſervices for the kingdom of GOD, which he had been projecting; and that on the account of them he was willing to live: *but*, ſaid he, *if the Lord of my life hath determined otherwiſe, I hope I can truly ſay, Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.* And then in a moſt compoſed & quiet frame, he gave his dying charges and directions to thoſe about him: I heartily pray, that I may always uſe the *diligence* and *induſtry*, which he recomended to me, in the ſervice of CHRIST; and be influenced by the motive wherewith he urged it: *one of a weak conſtitution, like yours*, ſaid he, *by the diligent improvement of time may do much ſervice for CHRIST, in a ſhort life.*

THE ſame happy temper continued with him all along: *reſigned* when he ſpake of living to ſerve CHRIST:

CHRIST: but *chearful* under the apprehenſions of death, as becomes a ſaint. To one of his brethren in the miniſtry, who asked him How he did, I remember he ſaid with a chearful air and voice, I will give you Mrs. † *Askew's* anſwer, *As merry as one bound for heaven.* When an honourable perſon of his church asked him, Whether he deſired to die by this ſickneſs, his anſwer was, *Sir, I dare not ſay, I do not; and I dare not ſay, I do. My great concern is to have no will at all about it: but to be entirely reſigned to GOD.* When he looked upon me in his laſt ſtruggels and ſaid, *walk on according to the ſame rule, by which we have walked together*; and when upon my deſire of his dying bleſſing, he turned to me & ſaid, *A CHRIST for you, and that is bleſſing enough*: the chearfulneſs and ſerenity with which he ſpake, were beyond deſcription.

[IT were eaſy to collect many other inſtances, wherein he diſcovered his reſignation, faith, hope and joy in the LORD. But of the many affecting paſſages which I have had from very good hands, I will mention theſe few following.

WHEN he firſt perceived the ſtroke of death, he expreſſed much ſatisfaction and tranquillity; and with an undaunted voice ſaid, *I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he can, and will keep that which I have committed to him.* When ſomething was applied to cool his eyes, which were inflamed by his fever, he ſaid, *In a little time all tears will be wiped from my eyes.* When ſomething was offered to quench his thirſt, he ſaid, *I am going to drink of thoſe rivers of delight, which flow from the throne of GOD, and of THE LAMB.* When the phyſicians intimated to him, that there was now no proſpect of his life, he lifted up his hands and eyes, and with a particular pathos ſaid, *Thy will be done*

† A Martyr in the reign of K. *Hen.* 8. *Fox's* Acts and Mon. Vol. 2. p. 576.

on earth, as it is done in heaven. When he was informed, how much the people of GOD prayed for him, he ſeemed greatly pleaſed with a tho't ariſing from that, *The prayer of the upright is His delight.* He tho't it worth being ſick, only that the infinite GOD might have the delight of the prayers preferred by ſuch numbers of upright ones. To his gracious and beloved conſort he ſaid, *You and I muſt never any more retire and pray together, as we uſed to do: but you may now, when you go alone and pray, think that I am at that very time praiſing and bleſſing and ſinging halelujahs, before the ſame throne of grace. I'll meet you there as often as you pleaſe.* And upon hearing her remark it, that he pleaſantly *ſmiled* upon her, while ſhe was looking on him with tears at his bed-ſide, the day before his death, he ſaid, *Why ſhould not I ſmile, when every thing looks ſmiling upon me.* Seeing his nephew Mr. *Byles* in the room, he called him to come near, laid his trembling hands on his head, and pronounced his dying bleſſing ---- "My dear child, and my ſon, my ſon, "I bleſs you; I bleſs you; I wiſh you all manner of "bleſſings! I know not what better to wiſh you "then this: Be ſtrong in the grace with which our "LORD JESUS CHRIST will always furniſh you. I "know not what better to wiſh you than this: That "you may be a bleſſed inſtrument of diſplaying to "others the beauties and the glories of our LORD "JESUS CHRIST. I know not what better to wiſh "you than this; That you may be very fruitful in "projections and eſſays to do good; That it may be "your great ambition to bring forth much, much of "the fruit by which our heavenly father may be "glorified. You have been acquainted with my "poor manner of living, even in the more ſecret "ſtrokes of it: follow what you have found in it, "according to the pattern of a glorious CHRIST. "My dear ſon, I do with all poſſible affection com-"mend you to the bleſſing of our dear LORD JESUS "CHRIST. Take my hands, and my heart full of "bleſſings." Feeling the pangs of death proceed with the greateſt violence; and when the ſtanders-by

apprehended him to be in the moſt painful agonies, he ſaid, with a ſort of triumph in his air & accent, "And is this dying! This all! Is this what I feared "when I prayed againſt a hard death! Is it no more "than this! O I can bear this! I can bear it, I can "bear it!"

THIS laſt paſſage leads me to mention it, that from the ſtrong reluctances of nature againſt the bitter cup of a very painful death which had been given to ſeveral of his venerable anceſtors, and paſſed down from them to diverſe of his fathers gracious children, he was often heard to deprecate it, in the time of his health. And with what earneſtneſs he has cryed to GOD in this place *for an eaſy death --- for an eaſy death --- for an eaſy death*, with ſuch a repetition of the cry, many of you here preſent are the witneſſes. But he was graciouſly heard, in that which he feared; and when it was obſerved to him, that GOD had heard his prayers for an *eaſy death*, I think his anſwer was in this one word, *Grace*! the laſt word, as I remember, that he was heard to ſpeak.

THUS was he kept in perfect peace, with a mind ſtayed upon his GOD and SAVIOUR: till he lifted up his eyes towards heaven; and ſweetly reſign'd his ſpirit into the hands of JESUS, without a ſtruggle or a groan. Lord, may we thus die the death of the righteous, and our latter end be like his!

AND I cannot forbear ſaying here, that I was never ſo affected with a view of the hope which the righteous have in their death, and the peace which is the latter end of the upright, as when I ſaw them in the laſt ſickneſs and dying hours of this ſervant of GOD. To behold a ſaint with all the tokens of a divine calm in his breaſt, not only daring to encounter the king of terrors, but riſing above all fears into joyful views of immortality; and in ſuch a frame giving the exacteſt orders and directions to all about him, according to their ſeveral characters and relations, that they alſo may be over-comers and win a never-fading crown in the kingdom of heaven: This is a

ſpectacle

ſpectacle inconceivably greater and more glorious, than a bold and venturous hero in a *campaign*, who fearleſs and unſhaken exactly directs the battle, when invironed with fire and death. O how much greater is it, to ſee a humble ſinner, through the grace of CHRIST poſſeſt with a full perſwaſion of the favour of GOD, biding adieu to all the charms of this world, encountring a death diſarmed by the redeemer, looking after all the inconceivable glories of the heavenly world, and expreſſing a divine concern for the eternal happineſs of others: How much greater, I ſay, is this, than to ſee a guilty creature, for the fading honours of this life, ruſh into all the hazzards of future miſery, when GOD and JESUS are not in all his thoughts, and thouſands of immortal ſouls are made the tools of his ambition! But as great a ſpectacle as this is, the religion of JESUS has often produced it; and, we may ſpeak it to the glory of the free grace of GOD, we have ſeen it in the death of our paſtor.

Now then, beloved, you may well think how much I feel, (may GOD keep me from ſinking under) the loſs of ſuch a father and ſuch a friend. I freely join my griefs to yours, to make up the mourning that heaven calls us to this day: and I deſire to join with you in all the ſentiments, tempers, reſolutions, and actions, whereby GOD may be glorified upon this occaſion. O that our ſorrowing and mourning may be after a godly ſort; from holy principles, and for religious ends! O that we may be deeply humbled under the mighty hand of GOD, and lay our ſelves low at His feet; under a ſenſe of our ſins and provocations, and of the divine diſpleaſure! O that while we thus humble our ſelves, we may by faith repair to the great ſacrifice for the prieſt-hood and for the congregation, and repent in duſt and aſhes! O that we may hold on crying mightily to GOD, for his pardoning mercy, ſanctifying grace, and comforting ſpirit! And let us never give over mourning before Him, till He turn away His anger; and by ſhewing us the tokens of His favour in CHRIST, quicken us in our reſolutions to ſerve and glorify Him in holineſs all our days.

AND among the other methods of glorifying GOD, as this providence requires; I desire to join with you, in expressing a christian sympathy with the bereaved family and relatives. If upon a just sense of *our* loss, we find such cause of mourning for it; how great then must *theirs* be, to whom the servant of GOD was endeared by all the tyes of natural affection, as well as grace and goodness? But I shall not attempt to describe their loss; lest I aggravate their sorrow. Instead of this, I address my self unto you, beloved, and say, I am confident of it, that you will shew the kindness of GOD to the bereaved family; in remembrance of the kindness which GOD has often dispensed to you by means of His servant, who is now called up from us: And I am confident, that the hearts of this whole people are united with mine, in fervent wishes to the GOD of all grace, that these mourners may be comforted.

WE wish then that you, Madam, who have lost an excellent *husband*, may now more than ever have the assurances of it, that your maker is your husband, whose name is the LORD of hosts; and find Him giving more and more of the brightest evidences of your espousal to Him. He alone can make the widow's heart to sing for joy: and while you trust in Him as your GOD in covenant, you may depend upon it, He will give you songs in the night of your affliction; when your prayer is to the GOD of your life. And as in His holy providence deep calleth unto deep, his billows are rowling over you, and you have sorrow upon sorrow: now remember, it has pleased the FATHER that all fulness should dwell in CHRIST, as the head of His people in His covenant; of whose fullness you may receive, and grace for grace.

WE wish that you who have lost an excellent *parent*, may by happy experience find, that when your father forsakes you, the LORD will take you up. With Him the fatherless find mercy; and may

your hearts receive comfort in hearing him speak to you that word: *whom the* LORD *loveth, He correcteth, even as a father the son, in whom He delighteth* ||. ——— And for you, my brother, who are left among us to bear up a name which from the beginning has been among the chief of the families of *New-England*, we earnestly pray, that you may inherit a double portion of the good spirit, which rested on your venerable ancestors. While you chuse their GOD for your GOD, & follow them as they followed CHRIST, you will be a worthy son of such a father; and be made a blessing, like him, in the service of the gospel, which you are entred into with peculiar advantages.

MAY such as are bereaved of an excellent *brother*, take comfort in the tho't of this: that our LORD JESUS CHRIST doth most graciously invite their consideration of Him, as their *elder brother*; and that He is *the resurrection and the life*.

MAY all the bereaved hear an allsufficient GOD saying to them, *I will never leave you, nor forsake you*. May His everlasting arms be underneath them to support them: and as their affliction abounds, may the consolations which are not small abound likewise thro' CHRIST JESUS; who can give the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

AND now may we all press after such a lively exercise of strong faith in the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of GOD thro' our LORD JESUS CHRIST, as will enable us to glorify Him; by the most becoming resignation to His will, under all the changes that come upon us. In this we shall take the most effectual method, to have our mourning turned into joy.

|| *Prov.* 3. 12.

WHEN the excellencies of creatures might no longer comfort us, the deceaſed ſervant of GOD would always lead us to CHRIST the fountain of them all; thro' whom we may ſay, *bleſſed be the name of the LORD*, when He taketh away, as well as when He giveth. And whither ſhould we go, but to the fountain, when ſtreams are dried up?

Now therefore let us remember, how we have received and heard; and while we are bewailing our loſs, let us realize it, that all the excellencies which rendred our paſtor ſo dear to us, were but a little ſtream (and to the glory of the divine fulneſs we may ſay, but a little drop) from the infinite and overflowing fountain of all good in CHRIST JESUS. *Then*, if our mourning this day be from a godly ſorrow that worketh repentance, we may ſee what grounds we have to hope in Him, with whom is the reſidue of the ſpirit, that He will thruſt forth labourers into His harveſt, and maintain a ſucceſſion of them who ſhall be the bleſſed inſtruments of building up His kingdom among us: and *then*, whoever is taken from us by death, we may comfort ourſelves, and glorify Him by ſinging that ſong, *The LORD liveth: and bleſſed be my rock: and exalted be the GOD of the rock of my ſalvation.*

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FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAg. 1 l. 27 r. grief. p. 3 l. 24. interceſſions. l. 28 deſpiſing. p. 4 l. 17. continue. p. 5 l. 31 coarſer. p. 6 l. 29 r. wherein. p. 7 l. 34 *dele* here p. 8. l. 2 *dele* and. p. 14. l. *ult.* r. their glory. p. 15. l. 20. lamentation. p. 28 l. 12 ſtruggles.